

WE CLAIM:

1. A method for conducting an online survey having one or more questions, said method comprising:

maintaining a survey database, said database comprising said one or more questions and data identifying a type of input field for each question;

receiving a request for a network resource including said electronic survey;

in response to said request, determining whether a previously compiled class file should be utilized to respond to said request;

in response to determining that a previously compiled class file should not be utilized to respond to said request, creating an executable class file capable of generating markup language for displaying said questions and said input fields in a web browser;

generating said markup language by executing said class file; and

returning said markup language as a response to said request for a network resource.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein determining whether a previously compiled class file should be utilized comprises determining whether said request for said network resource was a first request for said network resource.

3. The method of Claim 1, wherein determining whether a previously compiled class file should be utilized comprises determining whether said request for said network resource was a first request for said network resource or whether a web server operative to provide said network resource was reset since the last time said network resource was accessed.

4. The method of Claim 1, wherein said survey database further comprises data indicating how said input fields for each question should be displayed.

5. The method of Claim 4, wherein said survey database further comprises data indicating a sequence for said one or more questions and wherein said one or more questions are ordered according to said sequence when said class file is executed.

6. The method of Claim 5, wherein said survey database further comprises data indicating whether each of said one or more questions should be included in said electronic survey and wherein said class file does not generate markup language for each of said one or more questions not to be included in said survey when executed.

7. The method of Claim 6, wherein said survey database further comprises an application name corresponding to said electronic survey, a form name, and a version number.

8. The method of Claim 7, wherein said request is received at a web server computer maintaining said network resource from a web browser.

9. The method of Claim 8, wherein said web server computer is operative to receive response data corresponding to said input fields and to store said response data in a database.

10. A computer system for conducting an online survey comprising one or more questions, said computer system comprising:

a survey database comprising said one or more questions and data identifying a type of input field for each question;

a network resource including said electronic survey; and

a software component for receiving and responding to requests for said network resource, said software component operative to determine whether a previously compiled class file should be utilized to respond to a request for said network resource, to create an executable class file capable of generating markup language for displaying said questions and said input fields in a web browser in response to determining that a previously compiled class file should not be utilized, to execute said class file, and to

respond to said request with said markup language generated by the execution of said class file.

11. The computer system of Claim 10, wherein determining whether a previously compiled class file should be utilized comprises determining whether said request for said network resource was a first request for said network resource or whether said software component was reset since a previous request for said network resource.

12. The computer system of Claim 11, wherein said survey database further comprises data indicating how said input fields for each question should be displayed.

13. The computer system of Claim 12, wherein survey database further comprises data indicating a sequence for said one or more questions and wherein said one or more questions are ordered according to said sequence when said class file is executed.

14. The computer system of Claim 13, wherein said survey database further comprises data indicating whether each of said one or more questions should be included in said electronic survey and wherein said class file does not generate markup language for each of said one or more questions not to be included in said survey when executed.

15. A computer-readable medium comprising computer-readable instructions which, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to:

determine whether a request has been received for a network resource that includes an electronic survey;

in response to determining that a request for said network resource has been received, determining whether a previously compiled class file should be utilized to respond to said request;

in response to determining that a previously compiled class file should not be utilized, creating an executable class file capable of retrieving one or more questions and corresponding input fields from a survey database and generating content capable of displaying said questions and said input fields in a web browser; and

executing said class file and transmitting said content generated by said class file in response to said request.

16. The computer-readable medium of Claim 15, further comprising computer-readable instructions which, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to:

execute said previously compiled class file in response to determining that said previously compiled class file should be utilized and responding to said request with content generated by said previously compiled class file.

17. The computer-readable medium of Claim 16, further comprising computer-readable instructions which, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to:

utilize said previously compiled class file if said request for said network resource is not a first request for said network resource and if a software component for receiving said request has not been reset since a previous request for said network resource.

18. The computer-readable medium of Claim 17, further comprising computer-readable instructions which, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to:

retrieve data from said survey database indicating whether each of said one or more questions should be included in said response to said request; and to

create said class file in such a manner as to cause said class file only to generate content for displaying each of said one or more questions to be included in said response.

19. The computer-readable medium of Claim 18, further comprising computer-readable instructions which, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to:

retrieve data from said survey database indicating a sequence for each of said one or more questions; and to

create said class file in such a manner as to cause said class file to generate content for displaying each of said one or more questions according to said sequence specified by said survey database.

20. The computer-readable medium of Claim 19, further comprising computer-readable instructions which, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to:

receive response data corresponding to said input fields and to store said response data in a database.